

Decision No. 22553

BEFORE THE RAILROAD COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

ORIGINAL

In the Matter of the Application of

SAN GABRIEL CANYON STAGE LINE

for authority to increase passenger and freight rates and to suspend service on regular time schedules.

Application No. 16543

Hugh Gordon, by A. D. Poe, for Applicants.

BY THE COMMISSION:

O P I N I O N

A. L. Meier and J. E. Williamson, copartners, operating a passenger and freight service between Azusa and certain camps in San Gabriel Canyon, Los Angeles County, under the name and style of San Gabriel Canyon Stage Line, have made application to suspend scheduled service and to substitute therefor "on call" service for a minimum number of passengers or a minimum quantity of freight at advanced rates.

A public hearing herein was conducted by Examiner Williams at Azusa, at which time the matter was submitted, and now is ready for decision.

San Gabriel Valley Stage Line is one of the oldest in the state, having been begun over 20 years ago by Ralph Follows with horse-drawn vehicles. There were developed in this canyon a number of pleasure resorts which, in the summer season, were well patronized, particularly after applicants' predecessors installed automotive equipment. The copartners herein acquired the business

by authority of this Commission from the Follows estate. Soon after this acquisition, the County of Los Angeles, through its Flood Control District, began the construction of a dam about ten miles from Azusa in San Gabriel Canyon, which dam was estimated to cost 25 million dollars, and to give employment for a period of approximately seven years to from 1500 to 2000 persons. In anticipation of the volume that would result from such a large undertaking, applicants provided a schedule of rates which were approximately 50 per cent of the rates long established by Follows, and the reduction resulted in a satisfactory accretion of business, particularly to the dam site. In the fall of 1929, however, the Supervisors of the County of Los Angeles, after extensive engineering investigations, decided the dam project unsafe as planned, and ordered abandonment of all work. Since that time applicants have maintained scheduled service to Camp Bonita, a distance of 18 miles, and to Coldbrook, a distance of 21 miles, with a most meager volume of traffic, both passengers and freight. In preparing for the construction of the dam and the water to be impounded by it, the County of Los Angeles acquired a large area extending many miles up the canyon, including the resorts. The only two camps that remain open are Coldbrook and Bonita.

Mr. A. L. Meier, one of the partners, testified that a round-trip to Coldbrook Camp, at an elevation of approximately 4,000 feet, is over a large part of the distance by unimproved mountain roads, would cost, out-of-pocket, \$7.50, while a trip to Bonita Camp, elevation 2200 feet and over a route which requires fording the east fork of the San Gabriel River 18 times, would cost \$10.00. The stream at no point is bridged, and at times the water to be forded is $2\frac{1}{2}$ feet deep. According to the figures given by Mr. Meier, an operating cost per mile of 28¢ results, which does not seem unreasonable for the character of

the operation. The annual report of applicants for 1929 shows operating loss of \$1521.00.

Applicants now propose to return to the rates established prior to the commencement of active work on the dam, and to operate the service for a minimum of three passenger fares and a minimum of 500 pounds of freight, and to operate only on call. They have as equipment touring cars, a 12-passenger stage and a freight truck, and will retain this equipment for the service. Round-trip fares are to be double one-way fares. The minima proposed by applicants as rates were about equal the cost of operation except to Camp Bonita, which apparently will be less than the cost of operation. Applicants believe, however, that there will be at times more than the minima established, and that this will permit the operation to be continued without serious loss.

Although notification was sent to the proprietors of the two camps affected by the operation and to the public authorities, no one appeared to oppose the application.

It appears from the record adduced that there is not traffic sufficient to justify continued scheduled operation for either passengers or freight, and that applicants herein will provide an "on-call" service until such time as conditions change, and are offering all that public interest requires under present conditions.

We therefore believe that applicants should have authority to alter these rates and establish the minima as proposed in their exhibits filed with the application and the amendment thereto filed at the time of the hearing.

ORDER

This application having been duly heard and submitted, full investigation of the matters and things involved having

been had, and basing this order on the findings of fact and conclusions contained in the preceding opinion, which said opinion is hereby referred to and made a part hereof,

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that A. L. Meier and J. E. Williamson, copartners operating under the name and style of the San Gabriel Canyon Stage Line, be, and they are hereby authorized to establish, within twenty (20) days from the date hereof, appropriate passenger and freight rates between Azusa and Camp Bonita, Coldbrook Camp, and intermediate points, as set forth in Exhibits "A" and "C" attached to the application, and as further modified by the amendment filed at the hearing, fixing a minimum of three passengers and a minimum of 500 pounds of freight, and to withdraw and cancel other conflicting rates now on file with this Commission; and to conduct said operation on demand only, and withdraw and cancel time schedules now on file with this Commission.

Dated at San Francisco, California, this 21st day of June, 1930.

C. C. Seamy

Leon S. Whipple

W. B. Lewis

Commissioners.